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CIA - PERSONNEL SECURITY AND SUITABILITY

The Agency has special responsibility to ensure the loyalty, security consciousness, integrity and psychological stability of its employees:

a. Soviet and other hostile services assign overriding priority to penetrating U.S. intelligence organs by identifying and exploiting personal vulnerabilities and weaknesses of our personnel.

b. Such penetration can enable the enemy to identify and neutralize our own intelligence operations; learn what we know, and don't know, about enemy capabilities and intentions; gain insights enabling the enemy to confuse and deceive us; and provide vital information about U.S. national policy, military capabilities, technology, etc., with which Agency personnel often become familiar in the course of their routine work.

c. Intelligence personnel are not only an attractive target for the enemy, but in many respects a particularly accessible one. Unlike members of most Government organizations, intelligence personnel often must carry out their demanding and sometimes dangerous assignments completely alone and in hostile areas. They are thus subject to severe psychological pressures. They

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are far removed from immediate supervision, or even observation by friendly colleagues. In these circumstances any latent vulnerabilities and instabilities in their character or loyalty may come to the surface and be detected and exploited by an ever alert enemy.

d. The only protection against these hazards is a careful and thorough assessment of the individual to ensure the selection of the right man for the job.

e. This is essential not only in the interest of the Agency and the Government, but in that of the individual as well. Many people, through no fault of their own, are subject to latent weaknesses and vulnerabilities of one sort or another, and we believe it would be a great disservice to them to impose upon them burdens for which they are unfitted, perhaps leading to unfortunate consequences for them as well as for the Agency.

2. Hence we have over the years, with the best professional advice available, devised a system of medical and psychological tests and security checks designed to identify potential problems in these fields before they can cause serious damage. In a sense these tests may be compared with the thorough assessments employed in the selection of jet pilots and astronauts-- too much is at stake to take chances with avoidable human error or weakness.

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3. In the past there have been all too many cases where sensitive agencies of both the U.S. and other free world governments have suffered massive damage precisely because latent human weaknesses of individuals in key positions were detected and exploited by our enemies: several cases a few years back seriously disrupted the effectiveness of NSA; the British Intelligence Service has still not recovered from the effects of the Philby, Blake and other cases; the Germans, French and Swedes, among others, have had similar experiences; and even now an intensive investigation is taking place in Brussels to determine the damage to NATO security resulting from a recent espionage case there.

4. In sum, CIA's procedures for ensuring the security and suitability of its personnel have been developed over the years on the basis of the Agency's specialized knowledge of the aims and methods of the opposition, the importance and sensitivity of the Agency's responsibilities, the best available professional advice, and the cumulative practical experience of over two decades of Agency management. These procedures have, with only the rarest exceptions, had the full understanding and support of Agency personnel. Any major changes in these procedures should be adopted only after a most careful examination of the possible consequences.

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5. Because of the nature of the Agency's work, strong command authority is particularly essential. The provisions in the bill permitting an employee to bring in private counsel at the very outset of an inquiry into his performance, with the appeal provisions permitting him to go into district court or to the Board of Employee Rights, could cause very real problems. A few dissident employees using either frivolous or false accusations against a supervisor could completely undermine the authority of a supervisor and confront the Agency with a choice between permitting a breakdown in supervisory authority or defending the supervisor in open court, quite possibly necessitating the disclosure of highly sensitive information.

Of even more concern is the provision granting any applicant for employment the right to file suit in district court for alleged violations, or threatened violations, of the provisions of the bill. The Agency in recent years has experienced considerable harassment by dissident minorities in its recruitment efforts on the nation's campuses. Further, it has been brought to our attention recently that dissident minorities have taken advantage of a provision in the Selective Service Law permitting registrants to examine their own files at local draft offices, with the result that in the State of California draft boards are being so severely harassed that they are unable to accomplish any other business.

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Recognizing the weapons provided by the appeal provisions of this bill, such dissidents might launch a campaign of litigation virtually paralyzing the Agency's recruiting program and severely straining its administrative resources.

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